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May 13, 2004

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**METH COURIER IMPRISONED FOR 9 YEARS;
CONSPIRACY LEADER WILL BE SENTENCED TOMORROW**
23 Member, \$2 Million Meth Trafficking Ring Dismantled

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that RICARDO LINARES-AVILA, 29, Indianapolis, Indiana and Michoacan, Mexico, was sentenced to 9 years and 6 months imprisonment late yesterday by U.S. District Judge John Daniel Tinder following his guilty plea to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute. The charges resulted from a three month investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, Vigo County Drug Task Force, Terre Haute Police Department, and Vincennes Police Department. The investigation included

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LINARES-AVILA - 2

wire surveillance conducted over four cellular telephones.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Bradley A. Blackington, who prosecuted the case for the government, LINARES-AVILA will be deported following the completion of his sentence. Judge Tinder also imposed three years supervised release following LINARES-AVILA's release from imprisonment. During the period of supervised release, LINARES-AVILA must refrain from reentering the United States.

LINARES was a courier for a methamphetamine trafficking ring run by FRANCIS BLAIR operating in Indianapolis and Terre Haute from December, 2002 through September 19, 2003. LINARES, along with his brother, Carlos Linares, and Carlos Rodriguez, were arrested along Interstate 70 in Clay County, Indiana on August 27, 2003 in possession of 1.5 pounds of methamphetamine.

BLAIR, the leader of the 23 member, \$2 million trafficking operation, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine on February 17 and is scheduled to be sentenced tomorrow, May 14, at 10:00 a.m. before Judge Tinder in the Federal Courthouse in Indianapolis.

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